

intermediate interface, and allocating at least one of the communication channels to a first protection group;

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exchanging the communication information in the operational state of the intermediate interface via communication paths combined in communication groups, and allocating one or more of the communication paths and each of the communication groups to the communication channels, and

combining the communication paths in a separate communication path group allocated to the first protection group.

6. (New) The method of claim 5 wherein the exchanging of the communication information further comprises:

setting up a primary communication path in at least one of the communication channels of the first protection group;

allocating the separate communication path group of the first protection group to the communication channel containing the primary communication path; and

releasing the communication paths of the first protection group for interchanging the communication information if allocating the separate communication path group to the communication channel containing the primary communication path has been done successfully.

7. (New) The method of claim 6 wherein allocating the separate communication path group to the communication channel containing the primary communication path comprises exchanging protection switching operation messages via the primary communication path.

8. (New) The method of claim 7 wherein allocating the separate communication path group to the communication channel containing the primary communication path comprises allocating the communication path groups to the communication channels.

9. (New) The method of claim 5 wherein if the at least one of the communication channels has been allocated to the first protection group, setting up the primary protection path in

a first communication channel that provides an operational protocol for the primary communication path between the local exchange and the access network.

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10. (New) The method of claim 7 further comprising exchanging the protection switching operation messages via a protection protocol, wherein the primary communication path comprises a protection path in the at least one of the communication channel of the first protection group for exchanging the protection protocol related to the allocation of the communication path groups to the communication channels.

11. (New) The method of claim 7 wherein after releasing the first protection group for each of the remaining communication path groups:

allocating the communication path group to a communication channel not belonging to the first protection group based on the protection switching operation messages exchanged via the first protection group; and

releasing the communication paths of the communication path group for exchanging communication information, if allocating the communication path group to a communication channel not belonging to the first protection group has been done successfully.

12. (New) A system for managing an intermediate interface of a telecommunication network, the system comprising:

a local exchange and an access network for establishing and maintaining subscriber connections of the network;

a plurality of links, each link including a plurality of transmission channels for exchanging user information of the subscriber connections and for exchanging communication information for controlling the subscriber connections;

the plurality of transmission channels provided as communication channels for exchanging the communication information based on a pre-established configuration of the intermediate interface, and at least one of the communication channels allocated to a first protection group;